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## ECA Update: April 10, 2017

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### YUCCA MOUNTAIN, OMB DEPUTY, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

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#### Yucca Mountain on the Horizon?

For the first time in many years, the Administration budget request for the DOE includes \$120 million “to restart licensing activities for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository and initiate a robust interim storage program.” Budget consideration now moves to Congress which last acted to appropriate funds to DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for licensing activities in Fiscal Year 2010 (which included \$4.5 million in funding for affected units of local governments). Further, ther

The budget release came one day after Texas Attorney General Paxton filed a lawsuit against DOE and other federal agencies for failing to move forward to complete the Yucca Mountain licensing process, as is the law under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. (See story on page X).

The State of Nevada is already preparing to resume its fight against the repository. In January, the State’s Agency for Nuclear Projects released a “[Report and Recommendations of the Nevada Commission on Nuclear Projects](#),” outlining four recommendations for “preventing the resurrection

### UPCOMING EVENTS

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**House Nuclear Cleanup  
Caucus Event**  
Washington, DC

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8-9

**Intermountain Energy  
Summitt**  
Idaho Falls, ID

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of the now-terminated Yucca Mountain repository program. A resolution expressing opposition to a repository at Yucca Mountain has already been introduced in the Nevada Legislature and was endorsed by Nevada's Governor Brian Sandoval and Attorney General Adam Laxalt. It resolves to ask President Trump to veto any legislation to build "any temporary, interim or permanent repository or storage facility" or spent-nuclear fuel or high-level waste in the state.

Commissioner Dan Schneider of Nye County, NV, where Yucca Mountain is located, spoke at a hearing on the resolution on March 20, 2017 stating, **"Nine of 17 counties in Nevada have signed resolutions supporting the federal law to hear the science on Yucca Mountain."** After 35 years and \$15 billion, Nevadans and the nation deserve to hear the science and have a decision made by an independent body. Political science should not overshadow nuclear science." Schinhofen has also pointed out that Yucca Mountain is not just about finding a site for this material, but is also an issue of national security.

ECA has learned that Reps. Greg Walden (R-OR) and John Shimkus (R-IL) are currently developing legislation aimed restarting the Yucca Mountain project. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, they sent a joint letter to Secretary of Energy Rick Perry congratulating him on his confirmation, underscoring the importance of addressing nuclear waste management policy, and commending the Administration's budget for including funding to restart the Yucca Mountain licensing process. In the letter, Walden, the Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Shimkus, the Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment, outline specific actions they believe will help facilitate the implementation of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act:

**12-14**

**2017 National Cleanup  
Workshop**  
Alexandria, VA

[More info here](#)

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**13**

**House Nuclear Cleanup  
Caucus Event**  
Washington, DC

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- To reconstitute the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) – as established under the NWPA – dedicated solely to implementing the nuclear waste policy.
- To reassess the 2015 decision to pursue a defense-waste only repository policy, taking into account the fiscal and schedule implications of departing from long-standing existing policy to co-mingle commercial and defense waste.
- To provide an initial level of funding to the State of Nevada and the Nye County Commission. (The letter notes that they understand \$20 million in unobligated funds remain in DOE’s nuclear waste disposal accounts.)
- To work with the committee to amend the NWPA if DOE determines that an interim storage facility is necessary.
- To continue to provide monthly reports on the balance in DOE’s nuclear waste disposal accounts, detailing expenditures from the Nuclear Waste Fund.
- To work with them and committee staff to “identify constructively a path forward to manage our nation’s spent nuclear fuel as you fill out your leadership team and senior staff at the Department.

Finally, the Committee requests that a tour of Yucca Mountain be scheduled for Members of Congress. Secretary Perry is invited to participate.

## Updates for Washington

### White House picks Heritage Action alumnus for OMB deputy

By Sarah Ferris | Politico

President Donald Trump has nominated Russ Vought to serve as deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, the White House announced today. Vought, who was formerly vice president of grassroots outreach for Heritage Action for America, has been serving as a member of the president’s transition team.

As deputy director, he would be second-in-command to OMB Director Mick Mulvaney, playing a key role in next month's rollout of the White House budget.

Vought also served as a top budget aide to then-House Republican Chairman Mike Pence. And he was also executive director of the House GOP's in-house policy shop, the Republican Study Committee

## Calendar

Congress is in recess until April 24 - the year ahead for the FY 17 and FY 18 budgets along with other highlights are listed below:

*April 24* Congress returns

*April 28* Deadline - Continuing resolution for unfinished appropriation bills for fiscal year 2017 expires.

*April 29* End of the first 100 days of the Trump administration.

*Week of May 1* President Trump submits the budget for fiscal year 2018 to Congress (estimate).

*July 29-Sept. 4* House and Senate summer recess.

**September 12-14** **National Cleanup Workshop on September 12-14, 2017** at the **Hilton Alexandria Mark Center Hotel** in **Alexandria, VA.** <http://www.energyca.org/events/>

*September 30* **End of Fiscal Year 2017**

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